



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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BUSINESS APPOINTMENT APPLICATION: Air Vice Marshal Ian Morrison CBE

The Committee has been asked to consider an application from former Acting Air Marshal Ian Morrison, on taking up a role with Vistair. Air Vice Marshal Morrison was Director General at the Ministry of Defence, responsible for supplying defence equipment and services to Saudi Armed Forces (Defence Saudi Armed Forces Projects [MOD SAP]) from September 2012 to April 2018.

His last day in post was 4 April 2018, and his last day in Crown Service, 15 October 2018.

Appointment details

Air Vice Marshal Morrison has sought the Committee's advice on taking up a Non-Executive Senior Advisor role with Vistair, an aviation software company specialising in documentation, safety and risk management.

Air Vice Marshal Morrison stated this will be a paid, part-time position involving two days of work per month. He stated this global (including the UK) business development role will include working with foreign airlines and air forces to *"provide advice on independent, international defence and security, planning the commercial development of the company strategy"* relating to :

- air traffic control services safety improvement;
- global civil aviation safety and efficiency;
- and military market development.

He also stated it may include contact with HMG departments, such as the MOD.

Air Vice Marshal Morrison stated that he nor anyone he was responsible for awarded, administered or advised on contracts; had official dealings with or was involved in decisions; departmental administration; regulatory work or grants regarding Vistair within his last two years in office.

He also stated the only company he specifically dealt with within the last two years of office was British Aerospace Systems (BAES).

Departmental View

The MOD Business Appointments Panel considered Air Vice Marshal Morrison's application and confirmed the information he provided. The MOD confirm that whilst it holds a contract with Vistair, this sat outside Air Vice Marshal Morrison's role and responsibilities. The MOD also noted whilst he had no access to commercially sensitive information related to Vistair, he would have had access to internal MOD policy and strategies and recommended that the appointment be subject to restrictions which prevent:

- the use of privileged information, such as commercially sensitive information or not-yet-announced decisions on strategy, policy, or delivery;
- lobbying of the UK Government;
- lobbying contacts developed during Crown Service, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Governments or organisations in order to secure business for Vistair; and
- working on the bids and contracts related to the work of the UK MOD or its trading funds.

The Committee's Consideration

When considering Air Vice Marshal Morrison's application to take up a Non-Executive Senior Advisor role with Vistair, the Committee¹ took into account that, although Vistair have a contractual relationship with the MOD, it did not sit within MODSAP where he was stationed and his team had no involvement on the contract or works with the company. The Committee determined the risk Air Vice Marshal Morrison was offered the role as a reward was low.

The Committee also noted that, whilst Air Vice Marshal Morrison was not in a commercially focused role, he supplied the defence equipment and support in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and would have been sighted on high level commercial and other potentially relevant privileged information (including policy). The Committee further noted that this included information in relation to BAE Systems, which it broadly considered a competitor of Vistair. The Committee would therefore draw his attention to the ban on the use of privileged information which includes unannounced policy, strategy or delivery. Therefore this ban

¹ This application for advice was considered by Sir Alex Allan; Jonathan Baume; Baroness Browning; Lord Michael German; Dr Susan Liataud; Baroness Helen Liddell; Terence Jagger and John Wood. Richard Thomas was unavailable.

mitigates this risk of him using previous information retained. Additionally, the Committee considered it appropriate to apply a ban on Air Vice Marshal Morrison advising on bids or contracts relating directly to MOD and MODSAP or its trading funds, to mitigate the risk of the use of such information to the commercial advantage of Vistair.

The Committee also noted, in line with the MOD views, given Air Vice Marshal Morrison had access to contacts within both the UK MOD and in Saudi Arabia, as well as government contacts in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the Committee considered it prudent to apply a ban on the use of contacts he has gained in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UK while in office be applied. This would also cover contacts he has gained in organisations such as BAE Systems.

The Committee also considered whether a waiting period should be applied. However, it was determined the 14 months which have passed since he was in post significantly reduces the risk of his exposure to current privileged information. The passage of time, alongside the restrictions below, lessen the risk in relation to any previous information gained in post.

Under the Government's Business Appointment Rules, the Secretary of State for Defence accepted the Committee's advice that Air Vice Marshal Ian Morrison's appointment should be subject to the following conditions:

- he should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of himself or the organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to him from his time in Crown service;
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not provide advice to Vistair on the terms of, or with regard to the subject matter of a bid with, or contract relating directly to the work of, the UK MOD, MODSAP or their trading funds;
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK MOD on behalf of Vistair, or their subsidiaries, partners or clients; and
- for two years from his last day in Crown service, he should not become personally involved in lobbying contacts he has developed during Crown service, such as at BAE Systems; and in other Governments, such as that of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for the purpose of securing business for Vistair, its subsidiaries, partners or clients.

By 'privileged information' we mean official information to which a Minister or Crown servant has had access as a consequence of his or her office or employment and which has not been made publicly available. Applicants are also reminded that they may be subject to other duties of confidentiality, whether under the Official Secrets Act, the Civil Service Code or otherwise.

The Business Appointment Rules explain that the restriction on lobbying means that the former Crown servant/Minister "*should not engage in communication with Government (Ministers, civil servants, including special advisers, and other relevant officials/public office holders) – wherever it takes place - with a view to influencing a Government decision,*

policy or contract award/grant in relation to their own interests or the interests of the organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted or with which they hold office."

I should be grateful if you would ensure that we are informed as soon as Air Vice Marshal Morrison's appointment is taken up. We shall otherwise not be able to deal with any enquiries, since we do not release information about appointments which have not been taken up or announced, and this could lead to a false assumption being made about whether he had complied with the rules.

I should also be grateful if you would ask that Air Vice Marshal Morrison informs us if he proposes to expand or otherwise change the nature of his role as, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for him to make a fresh application.

Air Vice Marshal Morrison has announced or taken up this appointment, we will publish this letter on the Committee's website and refer to it in the relevant annual report.

Catriona Marshall
Committee Secretariat